2:Oberg E-5 (1946-1947)1949 SK7 Guana SK7 Terena

[Chaco Period]

THE TERENA

on agriculture became even less important. Conditions of the physical environment and cultural contacts, therefore, help to explain the economic readjustments which the Terena appear to have made in the Chaco.

Geographically the region formerly occupied by the Terena belongs to the great depressed plain of the upper Paraguay River known as the Chaco. The northeastern part of this plain is characterized by vast swamps relieved here and there by low crystalline hills. This part of the Chaco, too, has greater precipitation than the semiarid central Chaco. The Terena speak of their Chaco home as being wet and refer to dangers from floods. Although the annual rainfall here is estimated at 50 inches, it must be remembered that the rains fall from October to May, the remaining months being extremely dry. In the summer months, temperatures may reach over 100° F. During the winter months of July and August cold winds blow from the south, often bringing below-freezing temperatures.

This part of the Chaco is classified as savanna, swampy near the Paraguay River but merging into scrub forest to the west, with denser "galeria" forests lining the more permanent water courses. In the past, this region was particularly rich in plant and animal life which could be readily converted to human use. Among the wild plants which were of subsistence value to man were such trees and shrubs as the algarroba (*Prosopis*), the acacia, the Barbary fig, the chañar (*Gourliea decorticans*), mistol, the wild orange, and a wide variety of palms. Wild rice grew in the swamps. Locusts and the larvae and honey of bees were used. The scrub forests and swamps were the home of such animals as the deer, peccary, tapir, capybara, and the jaguar. Land and water birds were plentiful, and the rivers were stocked with many varieties of fish as well as turtles and shellfish.

Discussing the resources of the Chaná (Guaná), Sánchez Labrador says:

> The "Palo Santo" is the most widespread tree. They employ the hardwood of this tree to make spades to use in their fields, and pipes to smoke tobacco, which they appreciate very much. Birds are more abundant on the west bank of the river than on the east bank. The birds feed in the fields of the Chaná. They hunt many birds

[TEXT CONTINUES ON P.8-A]

[P.6-B]

rounded by a number of hunters and when the jaguar attempted to break through the circle of hunters he was speared, the hunter catching the jaguar on his spear in midair. Game was also caught within a circle of a grass fire. Pitfalls made on deer, peccary, and tapir trails were also widely used. For birds and smaller game, the Terena used deadfalls and a variety of loop snares fastened to bent-over saplings. Ducks were caught by swimmers diving and coming up under the birds or by surprising them at night in shallow water where they could be killed with sticks or stones. Dogs were used for tracking and in driving game to places selected for dispatching them.

When a man hunted alone, the game he killed was his. This game was later divided among the members of the household. In communal hunts the carcass belonged to the man who was able to kill the animal. The owner later divided the meat among the hunters.

The Terena used hunting magic consisting of certain plants which were believed to bring good luck to the hunter. Shamans were believed to know the kinds of medicines that brought good luck. Animal fat and salt were considered harmful to the hunter.

Meat was eaten boiled or broiled over hot coals. The Terena also used the earth oven for baking and roasting meats.

AGRICULTURE

The Terena selected their croplands near streams because the soils were richer and the moisture more adequate in the bottom lands. Care had to be taken not to plant a field in an area subject to summer floods. Brushwood fences were built to keep out wild pigs and domestic animals such as cattle and horses. Gourd rattles were sometimes used to frighten away birds. Magic was employed to keep away insects and other parasites.

Sánchez Labrador has the following to say about agricultural lands of the Chaná:

> The greatest part of the territory consists of low lands, which are clayey during the rainy seasons. However, when the heat is intense water is extremely scarce and even drinking water cannot be found except near the Paraguay River or some other river which comes from the interior and runs amid trees. When water is scarce, the people move to places where water is plentiful and subsist on hunting and fishing. Before they leave their settlements they plant maize, gourds, cotton, tobacco, and